



University of Toronto
FACULTY OF MUSIC

ORFORD STRING QUARTET

ANDREW DAWES, *violin*

TERENCE HELMER, *viola*

KENNETH PERKINS, *violin*

MARCEL ST-CYR, *cello*

ANTON KUERTI, PIANIST

Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building

SUNDAY, APRIL 27th, 1969 AT 8:30 P.M.

PROGRAMME

QUARTET in E-flat major, op. 74

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN

Poco adagio-Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Presto-Più presto quasi prestissimo

Allegretto con Variazioni

The so-called "Harp" Quartet is the tenth of 17 works for string quartet by Beethoven, and was composed in 1809 immediately after the piano concerto in the same key. It is probably the least well-known of the Beethoven quartets as it has the misfortune of being a "middle quartet".

The nickname "Harp" Quartet has been applied to this piece because of the extensive use of pizzicato in the first movement. Already in the transition from first to second theme groups in the *Allegro* we get a hint of what is to come. It is not until the retransition from development to recapitulation, however, that the genuine harp-like passages occur. The development concentrates almost entirely on the first theme of the *Allegro*, the second half of which is built on a rhythmic motive consisting of a dotted quarter and an eighth note. In his most characteristic fashion, Beethoven finally reduces the theme to this single motive, which is tossed back and forth by the first violin and the cello. When the dominant of E-flat has been reached, this motive is abandoned in favour of an arpeggiated figure, pizzicato, which rises from the cello through the quartet to the second violin. Each repetition of the pattern is in shorter note values, until the recapitulation begins. In the coda, the process is repeated, though not literally.

The *Adagio* is one of Beethoven's most romantic movements for string quartet. Its song-like theme, coupled with remote modulations remind us not only of Beethoven's mature style, but also of some late works of Haydn. The rondo structure of the movement (ABACAB) allows two repetitions of the main thematic material, each of which is more elaborate than the last. Here we see the mature style, in which texture becomes almost as important as melody. Each instrument has totally different music to play and often the melody, which is always present, must be picked out of a mass of figuration. The style of figuration, while it derives from late Haydn, goes much further than the older composer did in variety and in the simultaneous employment of the most diverse kinds of figuration.

The dot-dot-dot-dash rhythm of the following Scherzo cannot fail to remind us of the earlier 5th Symphony, though in fact it is treated quite differently here. The shape of the motive (a falling octave) and the metre ($\frac{3}{4}$) are enough to dispel any illusions of "influence" after a couple of measures. The finale is a theme and six variations plus a brief coda to end the piece in a rousing fashion. The theme, though a simple and unpretentious one, is peculiar in that it insists upon closing on G-major at the double bar rather than the expected B-flat. This gives the whole theme a strong C-minor colouring, a characteristic which is exploited in the subsequent variations. In the sixth and final variation an E-flat pedal in the cello clears up any misunderstanding which might have been created in the preceding variations.

STRING QUARTET No. 3

BELA BARTOK (1881-1945)

Prima parte

Seconda parte

Ricapitolazione della prima parte

Coda

The Third Quartet was written by Bartok during a visit to the United States in 1927. In it we see the concern with economy of thematic material and contrapuntal devices of all kinds so characteristic of Bartok's music in the late '20s and '30s. The *Prima parte*, which is in a moderate to slow tempo, is dominated almost entirely by a single motive and the themes which grow out of it. The motive consists of a rising fourth and falling minor third, and is first heard in canon between the first and

second violins beginning in the sixth measure. Thereafter it is subjected to a great variety of melodic and canonic elaborations until the basic shape is almost lost sight of through a process of melodic metamorphosis. The section ends with a clear statement of a theme derived entirely from the basic motive and leads without pause to the *Seconda parte*.

This second section is similarly dominated by a single motive, although it is perhaps a more flexible and less well defined one. It consists of a rising or falling scale figure which encompasses either a fifth or, more typically, a fourth. As in the first part, this motive is subjected to a series of variations in which it is combined with itself in canonic episodes, turned upside down, and given a number of rhythmic shapes. The *Seconda parte* is in a brisk tempo and contains some of the most successful of Bartok's coloristic writing for the quartet.

As its title indicates, the third section returns to the tempo and the motivic material of the *Prima parte*. It is by no means a literal recapitulation though, but is more in the nature of a "postscript" and a summing up of the first part. The *Coda* stands in the same relationship to the *Seconda parte* without, again, being a real recapitulation. Both of these final sections are considerably shorter than the corresponding first and second parts. Halsey Stevens remarks that this "arch-form" is typical of much of Bartok's most successful music.

INTERMISSION

QUINTET in E-flat, op. 44

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Allegro brillante

In modo d'una Marcia (Un poco largamente)

Scherzo (Molto vivace)

Allegro, ma non troppo

Although this is the only piano quintet which Schumann wrote, it is one of the most successful and widely played of his chamber works. It was composed in 1842 during a period in which Schumann was turning increasingly toward the classic forms and away from the more romantic piano music of his early years. The score carries a dedication to Clara Schumann nee Wieck, whom the composer had married two years earlier.

The first movement begins with a characteristic theme for the entire ensemble. This theme is made of a rising minor seventh and a minor sixth, and the kinetic energy created by these intervals gets the movement underway in fine style. The second theme, which begins with a falling fifth, is the ideal feminine response to the first. Here Schumann has fashioned a well conceived trio between piano, cello and viola in which each instrument is given a clear role to play. Such a purposeful, structural employment of orchestration is not always typical of Schumann, so that it is particularly gratifying when he does bring it off.

The second movement, a funeral march in C-minor (the parallel to Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony in the same key immediately suggests itself), is one of Schuman's most felicitous conceptions. Alternating with the austere main section, in which the piano is confined almost entirely to an accompanying role, are two trios in C-major and F-minor respectively. Each of the latter is increasingly more active, and only in the F-minor (*Agitato*) section does the piano play a leading role.

The following *Scherzo* is in essentially the same form, and it, too, has two trios which alternate with the principle section.

The most notable feature of the finale is the double fugue which closes the movement. Here the first theme of the opening movement is combined with the main theme of the finale. In spite of an impressive beginning and a couple of rather half-hearted attempts at stretto towards the middle, this "fugue" rarely has more than two real parts sounding at any time. It soon dissolves into busy work, and a purely homophonic coda based on the main theme of the finale ensues.

THE ORFORD STRING QUARTET

Four young Canadians — from Western Canada, Toronto and Quebec met in Mount Orford, the summer camp of Les Jeunesses Musicales four years ago at the suggestion of Lorand Fenyves.

Under his inspired guidance the Orford Quartet was born. Prof. Fenyves brought the quartet with him when he was appointed to the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Young as they are (both individually and as an ensemble) they have already aroused international attention.

The Orford Quartet has travelled extensively throughout North America and Europe and performed at major international music festivals including Puerto Rico and Spoleto where they were "quartet in residence".

On the occasion of their debut recitals in New York and Washington, D.C., critics were unanimous in acclaiming the quartet as one of the finest. "There suddenly are half a dozen absolutely world-class young groups in action, and to that heartening list the name of the Orford Quartet may now be added." (New York Times.)

"The members may be young, as is the Quartet itself, but there is nothing immature about the ensemble. It is an exceedingly fine group, worthy of ranking alongside the best in the field . . ." (The Washington Post.)

ANDREW DAWES, violin

A young artist of international renown, Mr. Dawes is a native of Western Canada where he began his musical studies with Clayton Hare and later, Murray Adaskin. On the advice of Isaac Stern, he enrolled at the Conservatory of Music in Geneva, Switzerland, in order to study with Lorand Fenyves, then concertmaster of L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. In Geneva, Mr. Dawes was awarded the highest marks ever given to a violinist when he won the Prix de Virtuosité. In 1966, he was a prizewinner at the International Violin Competition in Montreal where he competed with artists from the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and various European countries. In 1967 he won first prize at the Jeunesses Musicales Competition in Vancouver and in December of 1968, he gave a series of 18 recitals in Yugoslavia and appeared with Belgrade Symphony Orchestra and the Subotica Symphony Orchestra.

KENNETH PERKINS, violin

Also from Western Canada and a former pupil of Clayton Hare, Mr. Perkins began his studies at seven and made his concert debut with the Calgary Symphony at the age of sixteen. After touring Western Canada, he enrolled in the class of Ivan Galamian in New York where he remained for three years. Mr. Perkins joined the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra as concert-master here in Toronto and then moved to Montreal where he was a member of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the McGill Chamber Orchestra and taught at McGill University. Later he joined Mr. Dawes in the class of Lorand Fenyves in Geneva. As a soloist, Mr. Perkins has appeared across Canada, performed several times on C.B.C. Radio and has toured Switzerland and Italy as concert-master and soloist for the Collegium Academicum Orchestra of Geneva.

TERENCE HELMER, viola

Although the violist of the quartet, Mr. Helmer was better known in Canada as a fine young violinist. His early studies began in Toronto, where he worked with Geza Da Kresz and the renowned Kathleen Parlow. Under scholarship from the University of Indiana he continued his studies with Josef Gingold before leaving for Europe to study with Arthur Grumiaux in Brussels. Here he was awarded the Diploma Superior with unanimous vote and gave a series of educational programmes in Belgium. Tremendously interested in the chamber music repertoire as well as his own solo career, Mr. Helmer has worked with many fine musicians, among them Leonard Rose, Oscar Shumsky, Janos Starker and Alexander Schneider.

MARCEL ST-CYR, cello

Mr. St-Cyr comes from Quebec City where his early interest in music prompted him to become a member of the "Petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Bois de Québec". Later he showed a natural aptitude for the violoncello and began his studies at the Conservatoire de Quebec first with Lucien Plamondon and later with Walter Joachim. Mr. St-Cyr earned his Baccalauréat des arts and later the "Premier Prix de Conservatoire en Violoncelle". A Canada Council Grant enabled him to travel to Europe to study with Andre Navarra and also Leo Koscielnny in Germany. He gave concerts in France, Italy and Austria before returning to Canada with a "Licence de Concert";